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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the approaches taken to improve library service at Northland Pioneer College, a decentralized community college in rural Arizona with learning resource centers at 10 locations in Navaho and Apache counties. Three methods of providing instruction for research papers--class tours of learning resource facilities, presenting guest lectures on writing research papers, and a one-credit class on research paper writing--are discussed. Incentives arranged in cooperation with local merchants to encourage quality student work are described, e.g., free pizzas and video rentals, and the particular effectiveness of such incentives in a rural area is considered. Copies of fliers promoting the incentive program and listing rules for student participation are attached. (Contains 9 references.) (MES)

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MEETING THE COMPETITIVE CHALLENGE: ENCOURAGING THE USE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE LIBRARY FACILITIES IN RURAL, ISOLATED, NORTHEASTERN ARIZONA

by

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MEETING THE COMPETITIVE CHALLENGE:
ENCOURAGING THE USE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE LIBRARY FACILITIES
IN RURAL, ISOLATED, NORTHEASTERN ARIZONA

Rurally isolated Northeastern Arizona, specifically Navajo and Apache Counties, offers a unique challenge in providing quality library service in a decentralized setting. Northland Pioneer College is a decentralized operation with small learning resource centers in ten different locations in Navajo and Apache counties. These learning resource centers are interconnected by fax machines and telephone lines. A delivery service offers daily delivery to the four largest units, with twice-weekly delivery available to the six other units.

The current economic picture with regard to libraries has had an impact on the services that we have been able to provice. It has made it even more necessary to look upon our entire service area as a potential library resource. We have had to work hard to have outside agencies, businesses and services, buy into the services that we are trying to provide. The challenge has been compounded in that the community college has a largest library collection in the area, with the best service hours. Many of the area residents have not had sophisticated library services available to them. Many of the public libraries have limited hours, and are understaffed. Some operate entirely with volunteers, and funding available to them is extremely limited. Our unique challenge is how to provide quality library service to a population that is not used to library

services and what they can provide. One way that you encourage individuals to come into a particular library setting is to give them an offer that would be difficult, if not impossible, to refuse. Our free pizza and/or video for research excellence is such an offer.

Just about every library gives some form of research and bibliographic instruction. Sometimes this is done in formal classes which are set up for this purpose. Often, it is done as part of a particular class which concerns itself with library research. Common examples of this type of class include "Freshman English" and "American History."

In the fall of 1991, Northland Pioneer College, held its annual faculty convocation, a special day set aside for college-wide faculty workshops and information gathering. The college is staffed largely with part-time faculty members. Many of these individuals teach only one class. Since they are employed full-time in other occupations and/or areas, it is often difficult to hold regular staff meetings. The fall faculty convocation is set aside for all full-time and part-time faculty members. It is part of each faculty member s contract, and attendance is manditory. The 1991 faculty convocation held special meaning for the learning resource centers at Northland Pioneer College because an important announcement was made. A concerted college-wide curriculum shift was being made. Students are going to be required to do more writing in all courses, especially those that would transfer to a university. More

research will be assigned, and the research papers and/or projects will be given more weight to a student's grade.

The Learning Resource Centers at Northland Pioneer College have attempted to provide quality instruction for research papers in three ways. We have conducted class tours of learning resource center facilities. Careful planning with each instructor takes place before each tour so that our staff can be sure to point out materials and services which will be especially helpful to students attempting to deal with a particular instructor's subject matter. We have conducted guest lectures on writing research papers where we have been invited to do so. We have also designed a one credit class - LIB 145 - Writing a Research Paper - which teaches the techiques of research paper writing using our learning resource centers and the material housed in them. Students may use any research topic they choose to complete course requirements. The instructor will carefully guide the student through the entire process using material that is especially meaningful and relevant for the student. In addition, we are constantly looking for ways to draw students into our learning resource centers so that they might take advantage of our services.

Most of what we are doing in bibliographic instruction is standard and is accomplished in other community college and university settings. We have added additional incentives, however, by working with community merchants and

by looking at our community assets as actual and potential library resources. Pizza Hut has restaurants in most of the communities we serve. Rent a Flick has video stores in many of the communities we serve. We have contacted franchise owners and managers and have arranged special premiums to encourage and promote research excellence. Students can earn a free pizza and a free video by writing well. There is no cost to Northland Pioneer College or its learning resource centers, except that special flyers are prepared and distributed to students and faculty members. These flyers are prepared and printed internally, using the college's public information office and printing and duplicating centers. The two-sided flyer, reproduced with this paper, gives the rules whereby a student can earn a pizza and a video rental. Our cooperating merchants have had publicity photographs taken with college learning resource center staff members and the college president, and these publicity photographs have been printed in area newspapers.

This approach is especially effective in rural areas, where students and college personnel are known by area merchants. In order for a similar approach to be effective elsewhere, individuals would need to work with known merchants serving their areas. Pizza Hut and Rent a Flick are merchants that are known all over the Northland Pioneer College Service area.

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We have found that we have some very serious students who are anxious to do quality research work. The free pizza and free video are the carrots that are the extra incentive in many instances.

It has been our experience that if a patron has a positive experience when he uses our learning resource centers, chances are the individual will return. Our best advertising is word of mouth. If a patron has a good experience, he will encourage his friends and neighbors to investigate and see what kind of experience they can have. Word of mouth is especially helpful in rural areas where everyone knows everyone else. In these days where libraries are fighting for survival, it is good to have advocates that will champion the library cause. In this area, our best advocates are our patrons. They will stand up and be counted for libraries.

The idea of using the community as a library resource is more fully explained in Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs, prepared by the American Association of School Librarians and the Association for Educational Communications and Technology.

At Northland Pioneer College, where there are ten libraries serving ten different communities, we are taking steps to combine the resources of all of these communities into our total library program. Special care is being taken to assure that the unique individuality of each library and community that it serves is not disturbed. We are using

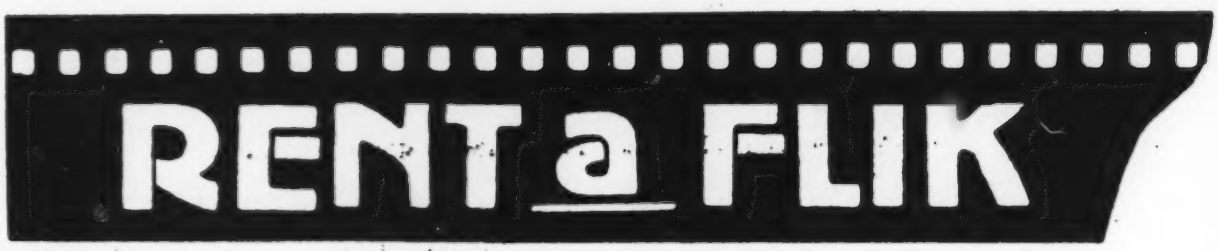
networking techniques to the fullest, and I am sure that as time goes on, we will think of other ways to bring new and continuing users into our library settings. Bringing them in is only the beginning. We will continue to work to find ways to hold their interest and encourage their continued use as well. Innovation and creativity are special keys to continued survival in our particular library setting.

Get a FREE PIZZA

from

and a FREE MOVIE

from



by earning

"A's" on Research Papers!

Contact your nearest

NORTHLAND PIONEER COLLEGE

LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER

Reward yourself for a job well done.
YOU CAN DO IT!

Rules for Student Participation

1. Student must earn an "A" on two different qualifying research papers.

2. The research paper must be a minimum of three (3) pages in length, double spaced, require research in the Learning Resource Center, and the sources used must be included on the footnote and bibliography pages. The footnote and bibliography pages are not to be included in the three (3) page minimum. Term papers and reports are not eligible.

3 Research papers that are submitted to more than one class only count as one research paper.

4. The course instructor will make the final determination as to whether the student's paper is a qualifying research paper.

5. The student must request that the instructor sign each research paper with a grade of "A" to confirm the grade awarded and its eligibility.

6. The graded and signed research paper must be submitted to the L.R.C. Upon presentation of the signed research paper, a certificate will be issued to the student and validated. Research paper will be stamped by L.R.C. assistant.

7. The student will keep the certificate until validated with two stamps.

8. Northland Pioneer College will not be responsible for lost or stolen certificates.

9. Upon receipt of two stamps, the student is invited to present the certificate at a participating Pizza Hut Restaurant in one of the following towns: Winslow, Holbrook, Snowflake/Taylor, or Show Low for a FREE medium pizza with choice of toppings.

AND

Upon receipt of two stamps, the student is invited to present the certificate at a participating Rent-a-Flik video store in one of the following towns: Winslow, Holbrook, Snowflake, Show Low, Winslow, Eagar, Pinetop or Heber for a FREE video rental.

NORTHLAND PIONEER COLLEGE

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